

Friis, John

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**From:** Pam Sweeney [pjcap3@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 22, 2009 7:57 PM  
**To:** Friis, John  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

Please accept this letter as testimony for my opposition to S.B. 1142 *AN ACT CONCERNING RELIEF OF STATE MANDATES ON SCHOOL DISTRICTS*. As a parent of a child with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, I know the impact that each of these proposals will have on children in special education programs throughout the State of Connecticut.

If we delay new suspension regulations, which are many times given for very trivial reasons, the children most at risk, those in special education programs, will lose valuable learning time by being sent home, and parents will have to miss a day of work. I know from experience that behaviors occur with special needs students because the appropriate behavioral plans and proper supports are not in place. Sending the student home does not address the underlying issues at hand. We can not delay this another two years.

As a parent of a two children with special needs in Connecticut Public Schools, changing the burden of proof from the school district to the parent will make an already daunting task even harder for the parent. I consider myself to be a very involved and knowledgeable parent when it comes to my children's education, learning all I can about the special education maze. I still have difficulties obtaining services for my children. A parent who is not as informed will lose any chance they have, because the balance power already lies with the district, and if the burden of proof is shifted, that balance will shift as well.

Lastly, If the state of Connecticut terminates services on a child's 21st birthday, then, in the case of my son, who is on the Autism Spectrum, his services will cease, mid-school year, in January. This can be very detrimental to an individual who thrives on a structure.


I thank you for your consideration of my point of view and reconsider changing the current mandates on our school districts by opposing S.B. 1142.

Respectfully,

3/23/2009

Pamela Cappiello Sweeney

Brookfield, CT



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